

C/ belt 64 whose ends 66 are attached to trolley 60. A servo-controlled motor 68 rotates the upper sheave 62 thereby moving belt 64 and trolley 60 attached thereto. A counterweight 70, which is sized to the weight of trolley 60 plus half of the anticipated load, is attached to belt 64 opposite trolley 60 in order to reduce the amount of torque required from motor 68. --

IN THE CLAIMS:

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Please cancel claims 26-31 without prejudice.

Please replace claims 1-20 and 22-25 with the following rewritten claims:

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1. (Twice Amended) A postal dispatch system which dispatches randomly arranged containers of sorted mail to particular dispatch carts, comprising:

a sortation conveyor having a main line defined by a conveying surface and conveying randomly arranged containers of sorted mail, a plurality of spurs extending from said main line in the direction of particular dispatch carts, a diverter mechanism at each of said spurs, said diverter mechanisms being positioned along said conveying surface and being operable to selectively divert containers from said conveying surface onto the associated one of said spurs; and

at least one transport mechanism which transports containers from each of said spurs to a cart juxtaposed with that spur.

2. (Amended) The system according to claim 1,

wherein said at least one transport mechanism is automatically operated and said carts are hand-operated.

3. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 1,

wherein said conveying surface is a continuous loop.

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4. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
including another diverter mechanism which diverts containers from a feed line onto said conveying surface.
5. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
wherein said at least one transport mechanism lowers containers from each of said spurs to a subjacent cart associated with that spur.
6. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
wherein said at least one transport mechanism includes a plurality of stationary transport mechanisms, one associated with each of said spurs.
7. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
wherein said at least one transport mechanism travels between plural ones of said spurs.
8. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
wherein said at least one transport mechanism raises a subjacent cart associated with that spur to the level of that spur and moves containers directly from the spur to the cart.
9. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 1,
wherein said transport mechanism includes an extendable support member and a vertical lift, said extendable support member being adapted to retrieve containers from said at least one of said spurs and to insert containers to the associated cart, said vertical lift being adapted to move said support member between the vertical level of said one of said spurs and the vertical level of the associated cart.
10. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 9,
wherein said extendable support member includes a plurality of fingers which comb between portions of said at least one of said spurs below containers supported on that spur.

11. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 10,
wherein said spur includes a conveying surface made up of a plurality of roller members and wherein said fingers comb between said roller members.
12. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 10,
wherein said vertical lift elevates said fingers upwardly in order to retrieve a container from said one of said spurs and elevates said fingers downwardly in order to insert a container to the associated cart.
13. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 9,
wherein said extendable support member is extended according to a controlled acceleration profile.
14. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 13,
wherein said extendable support member is extended by a variable frequency motor.
15. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 9,
wherein said vertical lift is servo controlled.
16. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 1, ,
including a plurality of said transport mechanisms, wherein each of said transport mechanisms is inhibited from operation when a cart serviced by that transport mechanism is being replaced.
17. (Twice Amended) The system according to claim 16,
wherein other transport mechanisms are not inhibited from operation when one of said transport mechanisms is inhibited from operation.

18. (Amended) The system according to claim 1,

wherein said conveying surface is defined by a plurality of powered rollers.

19. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 1,

wherein each of said diverter mechanisms is a pop-up diverter, said pop-up diverter being operable to raise one or more diverter portions to convey a container positioned at said pop-up diverter in a direction which is generally transverse to the conveyor direction.

20. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 1,

wherein said spurs are arranged on both sides of said conveying surface and wherein each of said diverter mechanisms is bidirectional.

22. (Amended) The system according to claim 21,

wherein said alignment device is funnel shaped.

23. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 10,

wherein said fingers are extendable horizontally in order to engage a container.

24. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 10,

wherein said extendable support member further includes a stripper member extendable horizontally independently of said fingers in order to slide containers off of said fingers.

25. (Thrice Amended) The system according to claim 1,

including a plurality of cart areas, each of said cart areas having an enclosure with a movable gate that can be selectively opened, said movable gates being selectively opened at some of said cart areas to allow for removal of the carts at said some of said cart areas while other carts in other of said cart areas are being loaded.